



Eco's 14 Points: A Refutation

Fascism has had an equal fate in its external history. On the one hand the democracies, scandalized by authoritarianism, the end of liberty, statism, autarchy; on the other Bolshevism, which viewed Fascism as a bourgeois and capitalist regime, indeed as the most bourgeois and the most capitalistic of all regimes. And, just as internally liberals and communists have only anti-fascism in common, so externally democracy and Bolshevism have found themselves united together only by anti-fascism. But if Fascism were overthrown at the national and international levels, what would tomorrow be? The answer to this question is now becoming evident, because with the end of Fascism the only thing that could happen is a renewed clash between liberalism and communism, and therefore a new fatal Fascism...

They continue to deny that Fascism has succeeded in fulfilling the proposed task and insists on the necessity of pursuing the same aim in another way, and in a very different effective manner. Thus in Fascism they see not a synthesis but a misunderstanding of liberalism and socialism, a hybrid combination, that is, in which the needs of both are mortified, without any positive result. And thus, even if on the same plane as Fascism, they have begun to suggest here and there a recipe for a truer and more comprehensive synthesis, in which the best of the two opposing regimes is saved and its defects and limitations are denied. No longer Fascism, therefore, nor Corporatism, but any other name they can come up with to designate that political and social principle that Fascism supposedly would not have been able to implement....

Fascism knows its insufficiencies, the dangers that loom over it, the distance that still separates it from its proposed aim; it knows the forces that have often rendered its tasks difficult and ambiguous; it has known, above all, active and passive resistance, both internal and external, which has altered and exhausted it. All of this Fascism knows and confesses, but precisely because of this, it denies with all its strength that the objection can be pronounced by others who are not Fascists. Because Fascism is not an abstract ideology that can be judged on the level of abstractions, it is not a utopia that can aspire to the perfection of a formal logic; it is a political movement that is inserted and operates within a specific historical reality and cannot be separated from it. Thus the only ones authorized to object would be the participants of another political movement that is able to translate into reality the same ideal principle while avoiding the errors of Fascism.

Carlo Alberto Biggini - Truth and Lies about Fascism

Introduction

Almost all of us are used to the ongoing debate surrounding “*what defines Fascism*”. This has been the result of the ideology being defeated in World War II and resigning itself to a few sparks which would appear across the world in places such as the Middle East and Latin America. **The use of Fascism in a slanderous/pejorative context became an issue for academics to solve, given that there were a variety of theories and interpretations of the Doctrine.** From this approach, there have been a number of works and intellectuals affirming they hold the proper definition of the ideology—from left wing thinkers up to right wingers, with some getting closer and others distancing themselves (due to a personal bias against the ideology). This has led to an endless discussion that is still going on in this modern age. Thus we ask ourselves, does the argument still have yet to be settled?

Not really.

A lineage of historians that have properly interpreted Fascism as a philosophically-rooted ideology. This definition has appeared throughout Israeli author Zeev Sternhell’s “The Birth of Fascist Ideology”, allowing for the appearance of works that argue for a more objective interpretation of Fascism.

A. James Gregor, Stanley G. Payne, Roger Griffin, Emilio Gentile, and many others constitute the main historians and academics that, following from or agreeing with Sternhell’s research on the matter, would dedicate themselves to study the phenomenon of Fascism. Their works would involve responses to some of the main claims and affirmations about Fascism, going from the left-wing claim (that Fascism was the Reaction of Capitalists trying to prevent a proletariat revolution) to the claims of historians such as Robert O. Paxton. Nevertheless, **their existence has gone unnoticed and disregarded, despite their international renown & academic recognition and despite figures such as Sternhell being called the main figure of the research of Fascism.** Nowadays, we can still see clear opposition to Fascist

thought, despite the fact most people are unaware of the aforementioned academics.

Sadly, it is common to meet opponents of Fascism that try to position the ideology on the left or the right wing of the political spectrum. Despite this, it is possible to understand types of Fascism in terms of the political spectrum insofar as it is recognized that you can only position the branches of Fascism, not the ideology itself (which is too varied in its types). Fascism falls on its own spectrum with a variety of nationally-organic ideologies that would base their cultural, political and geographic outlines on their own historical context.

Simply put, Fascism creates its own spectrum of ideologies that constitute its basis, thus, becoming a Third Position more broadly. As a way to explain this, we can compare it to Anarchism: in the same way different Anarchists have their own divisions and ways of “achieving” the destruction of hierarchies, different Fascists have their own ways of accomplishing the ideal of Fascism through their separate methods based on the cultural outlines of different nations.

In a broader, more-general, and universal sense—a Fascist nation can attach itself to an ideal just as another can oppose said ideal. The necessity of agreeing with each other can only be applied to the basis of the ideology, everything afterwards will correspond with the Nation it is theorized in. As the main philosopher of Fascist thought, Giovanni Gentile would call Fascism a way of life, and a method for politics, not a political ideology in and of itself.

What happens when an ideology has lost its main ground and is now resigned to second and third world status?

It has to accept there will be slander and misinterpretation in proportion to the the amount of opposition to the ideology that “*caused atrocities such as the Holocaust*”. It is in this way that, along with the honest interpretations of Fascism, so too do the dishonest Anti-Fascist interpretations appear.

It must be pointed out that these descriptions and conceptions of Fascism do not come from a standpoint of academic integrity or from a point of

view that is intellectually honest. These characterizations are just forms of slander made to justify their preconceived notions of Anti-Fascism, to justify their struggle against “tyranny and abuse”—the most totalitarian aspects of Capitalism and the marching of the hammer that squashes every nail that sticks out. Truth of the matter is that most of these statements come from a place of biased sources and preconceived pejoratives. **You cannot expect someone that already opposes the ideology (or that is already brainwashed) to actually or academically explain to you what they mean when they say that “Fascism is such an awful ideology”.**

It is out of this tendency that we get authors such as Umberto Eco: a modern favorite of the left-wing on the political spectrum. This is a type of person that certainly does not wish to rationalize Fascism. **All they do is seek to condemn the reactionary and right wing tendencies of those they don’t like as “Fascist”.**

Under the view of Eco and the definitions of many other “qualified historians”, **the definition becomes so broad, nonsensical, and abstract that many non-fascists can be categorized as such. If we were to summarize Eco’s definition, it could be regarded as the definitive way of claiming everything one deems as bad and authoritarian as “Fascist”.** As funny as it is, the view Eco has of Fascism (despite having been raised in Fascist Italy) **ends up being the most misinformed and intellectually dishonest definition that has been put forward to the public.** We could even go as far as to say that the Soviet attempt of describing “*Fascism as Capitalism in Decay*” had more ground to stand on.

Nowadays, there is a tendency amongst leftists, especially in the online sphere, to cite Eco as “the big man that defined Fascism best”, the guy that “nailed it to the table with his awesome wit”, and “finally gave us the best understanding of Fascism”.

The shame on them is that the research is not on their side and it goes to the extent of humiliating their definition down to its very foundation. All that is left to do is either cope and deny the validity of historians with an influence in academia (like Sternhell) or to simply live in denial, because **god forbid that Fascism is considered a proper ideology and not the raging, violent,**

irrational movement it is regarded as by those who have done no scholarly research.

It is our purpose to provide a complete deconstruction of the 14 Points of the pseudo-intellectual Umberto Eco. The rebuttal that "*Fascism is Capitalism in Decay* " has been beaten to death in such a way that it is no longer what we should focus on debunking. We will provide extended analysis and sourcing, given the fact that, as an old saying goes: *it is easy to make up a lie, but far more complicated to debunk it*. The duty that we have undertaken is to shed light where darkness has taken over. **The dark age of knowledge on Fascism can be stopped if we set ourselves out to spread accurate information on it. The future is truly ours, the question is: do we have the will to take it?**



Ur-Fascism

“1. The first feature of Ur-Fascism is the *cult of tradition*. Traditionalism is of course much older than fascism. Not only was it typical of counter-revolutionary Catholic thought after the French revolution, but it was born in the late Hellenistic era, as a reaction to classical Greek rationalism. In the Mediterranean basin, people of different religions (most of them indulgently accepted by the Roman Pantheon) started dreaming of a revelation received at the dawn of human history. This revelation, according to the traditionalist mystique, had remained for a long time concealed under the veil of forgotten languages—in Egyptian hieroglyphs, in the Celtic runes, in the scrolls of the little known religions of Asia.”

“2. Traditionalism implies the *rejection of modernism*. Both Fascists and Nazis worshiped technology, while traditionalist thinkers usually reject it as a negation of traditional spiritual values. However, even though Nazism was proud of its industrial achievements, its praise of modernism was only the surface of an ideology based upon Blood and Earth (*Blut und Boden*). The rejection of the modern world was disguised as a rebuttal of the capitalistic way of life, but it mainly concerned the rejection of the Spirit of 1789 (and of 1776, of course). The Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, is seen as the beginning of modern depravity. In this sense Ur-Fascism can be defined as *irrationalism*.”

“3. Irrationalism also depends on the cult of *action for action's sake*. Action being beautiful in itself, it must be taken before, or without, any previous reflection. Thinking is a form of emasculation. Therefore culture is suspect insofar as it is identified with critical attitudes. Distrust of the intellectual

world has always been a symptom of Ur-Fascism, from Goering's alleged statement ("When I hear talk of culture I reach for my gun") to the frequent use of such expressions as "degenerate intellectuals," "eggheads," "effete snobs," "universities are a nest of reds." The official Fascist intellectuals were mainly engaged in attacking modern culture and the liberal intelligentsia for having betrayed traditional values."

"4. No syncretistic faith can withstand analytical criticism. The critical spirit makes distinctions, and to distinguish is a sign of modernism. In modern culture the scientific community praises disagreement as a way to improve knowledge. For Ur-Fascism, disagreement is treason."

"5. Besides, disagreement is a sign of diversity. Ur-Fascism grows up and seeks for consensus by exploiting and exacerbating the natural *fear of difference*. The first appeal of a fascist or prematurely fascist movement is an appeal against the intruders. Thus Ur-Fascism is racist by definition."

"6. Ur-Fascism derives from individual or social frustration. That is why one of the most typical features of the historical fascism was the *appeal to a frustrated middle class*, a class suffering from an economic crisis or feelings of political humiliation, and frightened by the pressure of lower social groups. In our time, when the old "proletarians" are becoming petty bourgeois (and the lumpen are largely excluded from the political scene), the fascism of tomorrow will find its audience in this new majority."

"7. To people who feel deprived of a clear social identity, Ur-Fascism says that their only privilege is the most common one, to be born in the same country. This is the origin of nationalism. Besides, the only ones who can provide an identity to the nation are its enemies. Thus at the root of the Ur-Fascist

psychology there is the *obsession with a plot*, possibly an international one. The followers must feel besieged. The easiest way to solve the plot is the appeal to xenophobia. But the plot must also come from the inside: Jews are usually the best target because they have the advantage of being at the same time inside and outside. In the US, a prominent instance of the plot obsession is to be found in Pat Robertson's *The New World Order*, but, as we have recently seen, there are many others."

"8. The followers must feel humiliated by the ostentatious wealth and force of their enemies. When I was a boy I was taught to think of Englishmen as the five-meal people. They ate more frequently than the poor but sober Italians. Jews are rich and help each other through a secret web of mutual assistance. However, the followers must be convinced that they can overwhelm the enemies. Thus, by a continuous shifting of rhetorical focus, the enemies are at the same time too strong and too weak. Fascist governments are condemned to lose wars because they are constitutionally incapable of objectively evaluating the force of the enemy."

"9. For Ur-Fascism there is no struggle for life but, rather, life is lived for struggle. Thus *pacifism is trafficking with the enemy*. It is bad because *life is permanent warfare*. This, however, brings about an Armageddon complex. Since enemies have to be defeated, there must be a final battle, after which the movement will have control of the world. But such a "final solution" implies a further era of peace, a Golden Age, which contradicts the principle of permanent war. No fascist leader has ever succeeded in solving this predicament."

"10. Elitism is a typical aspect of any reactionary ideology, insofar as it is fundamentally aristocratic, and aristocratic and militaristic elitism cruelly implies *contempt for the weak*. Ur-Fascism can only advocate a *popular*

elitism. Every citizen belongs to the best people of the world, the members of the party are the best among the citizens, every citizen can (or ought to) become a member of the party. But there cannot be patricians without plebeians. In fact, the Leader, knowing that his power was not delegated to him democratically but was conquered by force, also knows that his force is based upon the weakness of the masses; they are so weak as to need and deserve a ruler. Since the group is hierarchically organized (according to a military model), every subordinate leader despises his own underlings, and each of them despises his inferiors. This reinforces the sense of mass elitism.”

“11. In such a perspective *everybody is educated to become a hero*. In every mythology the hero is an exceptional being, but in Ur-Fascist ideology, heroism is the norm. This cult of heroism is strictly linked with the cult of death. It is not by chance that a motto of the Falangists was *Viva la Muerte* (in English it should be translated as “Long Live Death!”). In non-fascist societies, the lay public is told that death is unpleasant but must be faced with dignity; believers are told that it is the painful way to reach a supernatural happiness. By contrast, the Ur-Fascist hero craves heroic death, advertised as the best reward for a heroic life. The Ur-Fascist hero is impatient to die. In his impatience, he more frequently sends other people to death.”

“12. Since both permanent war and heroism are difficult games to play, the Ur-Fascist transfers his will to power to sexual matters. This is the origin of *machismo* (which implies both disdain for women and intolerance and condemnation of nonstandard sexual habits, from chastity to homosexuality). Since even sex is a difficult game to play, the Ur-Fascist hero tends to play with weapons—doing so becomes an ersatz phallic exercise.”

“13. Ur-Fascism is based upon a *selective populism*, a qualitative populism, one might say. In a democracy, the citizens have individual rights, but the

citizens in their entirety have a political impact only from a quantitative point of view—one follows the decisions of the majority. For Ur-Fascism, however, individuals as individuals have no rights, and the People is conceived as a quality, a monolithic entity expressing the Common Will. Since no large quantity of human beings can have a common will, the Leader pretends to be their interpreter. Having lost their power of delegation, citizens do not act; they are only called on to play the role of the People. Thus the People is only a theatrical fiction. To have a good instance of qualitative populism we no longer need the Piazza Venezia in Rome or the Nuremberg Stadium. There is in our future a TV or Internet populism, in which the emotional response of a selected group of citizens can be presented and accepted as the Voice of the People.”

“14. Ur-Fascism speaks Newspeak. “All the Nazi or Fascist schoolbooks made use of an impoverished vocabulary, and an elementary syntax, in order to limit the instruments for complex and critical reasoning.”

Umberto Eco - 1995

Ur-Fascism by Eco

- I- The cult of tradition
- II -The rejection of modernism
- III - The cult of action for action's sake
- IV - Disagreement is treason.
- V - Fear of difference
- VI - Appeal to social frustration
- VII - The obsession with a plot
- VIII - The enemy is both strong and weak
- IX - Pacifism is trafficking with the enemy
- X - Contempt for the weak
- XI - Everybody is educated to become a hero
- XII - Machismo and weaponry
- XIII - Selective populism
- XIV - Ur-Fascism speaks Newspeak

I

The cult of Tradition/Traditionalism

“The old parties and the old men who carry on with the exploitation of the political Italy of tomorrow, as if nothing had happened, will be swept aside. The music of tomorrow will have another tempo. It will be an andantino sostenuto, and a hot fortissimo will not be ruled out. There will also be many a diesis in key. It is this prediction which makes us observe with a certain contempt everything that is said and done by the old windbags who govern us, so full of presumption, sacred formulas and senile imbecility.

These gray-haired people still desperately clinging to old patterns are pitiful. They are people who missed the train. The train passed and these people are still standing on the platform of the station with their grimaced and spiteful faces. The words republic, democracy, radicalism and liberalism no longer have any more meaning than the word socialism...”

Benito Mussolini – Trenchocracy

“The times in which we live no longer allow of a sedentary egoistical life; everything must be on the go, everybody must raise the standard of his activity, both in the offices and in the factories where the work is done—(Applause.)—and the Government, which I have the honour to represent, is the Government of speed, that is to say, we get rid of all that is stagnant in our national life.

Formerly the bureaucracy dozed over deferred decisions, to-day it must proceed with the maximum of rapidity. (Applause.) If we all go ahead with this energy, good-will and cheerfulness we shall surmount the crisis, which for that matter is already partly overcome.

I am pleased to see that Rome also is waking up and can offer us sights such as these works. I maintain that Rome can become an industrial centre. The Romans must be the first to disdain to live solely upon their memories. The Coliseum and the Forum are glories of the past, but we must build up the

glories of to-day and of to-morrow. We belong to the generation of builders who, by work and discipline, with hands and brains, desire to reach the ultimate and longed-for goal, the greatness of the future nation, which will be a nation of producers and not of parasites.”

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, January 19, 1923

“Sometimes you must break down and destroy in order to prepare the foundation for future building. Just as a builder can not build if the ground is not paved and freed from stones and thorns, so Fascism could not build if it did not destroy the old mentality, the old cliques, and the old egoistic interests... For Fascism it is not a pride of passivity: you have to be worthy of that grandeur, not live upon it, and not use it as degenerate sons. Some say: ‘We are great because we were great.’ No! We will be great when the past becomes an impulse, a ferment of life.”

A Diary of the Will

“We must ruthlessly eject the conservatives, the cowards, the fainthearted and the men of yesterday from our ranks and even from our lives.”

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, October 27, 1930

This is perhaps the point that deserves the most laughter, and there are many who actually believe it outside of Eco! This is why I must exert myself in order to debunk it...

It is often understood that Fascism was, in of itself, a reaction: a mere movement trying to battle Communism because they were threatening Capitalism.

It is claimed Fascism was not a revolutionary force of its own, and that it wished to preserve the government of yesterday or, at least, built upon it and

maintain some sort of order.

Although Fascism was not traditionalist, it did make an appeal to tradition to further the interests of the state, and as a result it could be seen as traditional. **In the same way it is national without necessarily being nationalist, it is traditional without being traditionalist.**

A number of academic works demonstrate why this belief is flawed.

Mussolini would oppose Communism for its internationalist beliefs, not because it had strikes or land occupations, and, funnily enough, **Mussolini approved land occupations and strikes insofar as they weren't carrying the Red Flag.** Not only that, but when it came to helping landowners, the landlords would give up their land voluntarily to the fascists in exchange for protection from Communists. And what would the fascist do with this land? **Give it to peasants!**

*“Italy came closest to Socialist revolution in the late summer of 1920, though this would only become clear with hindsight. In June 1920 an army battalion had mutinied in Ancona after refusing to embark for Albania, which Italy had partly occupied since the war, and workers in the city came out in force to support the mutineers. For a few days, until the army snuffed out the rebellion, it looked as if it might spread. But then at the beginning of September workers, especially in the major cities of the industrial north, began to occupy factories and in the countryside peasants took over farms. They locked out their employers and ran the factories and farms themselves. About 1 million workers were involved. **Mussolini was in favour of the occupations, he wrote, so long as they did not become a Bolshevik experiment...***

*By April 1920 largely Socialist peasant leagues had seized 27,000 hectares of farmland from 191 landowners and handed over the land to 101 workers' co-operatives. The authorities did nothing to stop these seizures partly because of a law which decreed that war veteran peasants should be given leases on uncultivated agricultural land. **Over every town and city hall controlled by the Socialists flew not the Italian tricolour but the red flag of revolution.** In 1920 strikes and arson caused the loss of one-third of the hay*

crop, one-fifth of the grain crop and one-quarter of the grape harvest. In the province of Ferrara alone there were 192 arson attacks on farmland in 1920 and the prefect wrote that 'columns of hundreds of leaguists had committed serious crimes against people and property'.

*It was to break free of this tyranny that rural Fascism began. Rural Fascism turned Fascism into a force of national importance virtually overnight. Its explosive growth and violence would change Fascism for ever. In January 1921 Mussolini stated his position on the agricultural issue in Il Popolo d'Italia. 'Faced with the agrarian problem the position of Fascism is tententially this: land to him who works it and makes it yield. No "socialisation of the land", a meaningless phrase and — above all — no agricultural state.' **In return for squadrista support against Socialists, the Fascists persuaded the landowners to hand over large areas of land to the peasants on long leases — especially in Emilia Romagna. Fascist agrarian policy aimed to replace wage labour whenever possible with leases or ownership of small plots. The Fascist agrarian programme published in June 1921 stated that 'land should belong to him who works it'.***

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

The fact that Fascism aligned itself with right-wing Traditionalists becomes less significant when you consider that **it also had left-wing Futurists as one of its main wings when it first started**. Futurists were known for being extremely **anti-Traditionalist**, and demanded a full advance towards the future with no attachments to the past. Futurists would, of course, be disappointed due to the concessions that Mussolini would entertain, but so would right-wing Traditionalists once they realized that Fascism had its own plans...

"Fascism was prepared to involve the state in complex economic activities if that intervention was conceived necessary to further one or another primary ideological commitment. Under those circumstances, as time passed, it became more and more difficult to distinguish purely economic matters from

those that were political and the proper function of a presumptively Manchestrian administration.

As a consequence, during the first years of the regime, conservatives and revolutionaries, both within and outside the Fascist party, jockeyed for positions and advantage. Under the circumstances, Fascist theoreticians often papered over tensions by maintaining that the revolution was disposed to “conserving” whatever was of value from the past. That seemed to satisfy the class of “fellow travelers” who imagined that Fascism would serve their conservative or liberal interests. They chose to understand Fascism as a transitional regime, destined to restore the antecedent economically and politically liberal order.

With the murder of Matteotti in June 1924, those conservatives and liberals who had collected around Fascism prior to the March on Rome began to fall away. At the same time, there was a sudden erosion of equity values. Apprehension grew among the propertied classes—many withdrew their support—and the opposition press arrayed itself against the government. There were large-scale defections—particularly among the business and financial communities—together with a substantial number from the Fascist syndicates. To add to the mounting difficulties, the formal political opposition “seceded” from parliament in moral outrage— and sought to mobilize the public as well as the Crown against the government. The entire system was threatened.”

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

Julius Evola is a perfect example of the right turning against Fascism. Here was a figure that many (such as Eco) deem as one of the most important Fascists thinkers, yet upon a closer inspection, not only was the Fascist government suspicious of him, but also, the disagreements between Fascism and Evolian Traditionalism would be displayed even during the existence of the Italian Fascist Regime. For Evola, Fascism was useful to Traditionalism **(and not the other way around)**, in other words, **Evola did not see any value in the doctrine of Fascism itself and only saw it as a tool to advance his own agenda.**

“Fascism, for Evola, as it had manifested itself in Mussolini’s revolution, was a material thing, without a soul. It was a revolution that had mobilized to its standards some of the dregs of society. It had been ‘born of compromise, fed on rhetoric and the petty ambitions of petty people. The state system it fabricated [was] uncertain, ill-conceived, violent, unfree, and subject to equivocations.’ What Fascism needed was a soul—to be governed not by leaders chosen by chance or popular appeal, but by those animated by the ‘true Wisdom’ of ‘cosmic Masters.’ Only in those circumstances would people spontaneously sort themselves into castes—as they had in the antiquity of China, Persia, and Egypt—to thereby provide structure for a ‘true state.’ A caste arrangement would provide ‘unconditional freedom’ for those infused with cosmic wisdom and unlimited power—thereby to capture the “rational essence” of true liberalism...

He condemned the ‘socialistoid’ and ‘demagogic’ character of Fascist corporativism. The only way Fascism could hope for deliverance was to be infilled with the ‘calm illumination’ of that true ‘Wisdom’ arising out of Mediterranean ‘hermetic and pythagorean silence’—finding confirmation of its ‘Truth’ through ‘acts of power,’ resonating with ‘vibrations in the blood,’ rather than via the provision of pallid ‘arguments and the writing of books.’ Only if Fascism succeeded in finding its ‘light’ in the Bhagavad-gita might it be made truly revolutionary—to restore the ‘traditional order of things’ to a decadent modern world.

In all of this, little of Mussolini’s Fascism, other than some of its vocabulary, escaped unscathed. Almost four decades later, Evola was to repeat the same roster of objections—and convey his conviction that Mussolini had never been sufficiently “spiritual” to understand any of it. In effect, for the youthful Evola, Fascism, as it was, had precious few immediate and evident virtues. Early in 1925, his intention had been to convey all that by undertaking efforts that were expressly anti-Fascist. He soon reconciled himself to Fascism, however, apparently in order to employ it as a vehicle to bring to its elite the ‘traditional wisdom’ of his ‘invisible Masters’—in order that they might assist him in mounting a revolution against the anti-traditional decadence of the postmedieval modern world...

*Evola was never a fascist, however the term is understood. He provided idiosyncratic meaning for all its principal concepts in his candid effort to further the interests of that arcane Tantric and Vedic Wisdom that he had made his own. **With respect to Fascism, he advocated a total rejection of any notion of a 'totalitarian state' that rested on a nationalism that required obedience and commitment. Terms that had become familiar to Fascists, such as 'hierarchy,' 'leadership,' 'elitism,' the 'state,' 'imperialism,' and 'myth' all had their meanings transmogrified in the lexicon of Evola's traditional Mediterranean vision...***

Evola clearly held Mussolini and Fascism to have been nothing other than a 'hypnotic' side show that might be conveniently employed as a means of communicating the profound realities of a transcendent world to those capable of understanding. It seems clear that throughout his life, Evola sought to use Fascism's instrumentalities to educate a truly "spiritual" elite who would undertake the restoration of the "Traditional" virtues of the ancient world...

***Evola sought to create a movement that would labor for neither Fascism nor National Socialism—but for a 'truly Traditional Right.' That was the political movement that survived the war. It had precious little to do with Fascism. For the history of Fascist doctrine, it is of some significance that virtually all the intellectuals with whom Evola associated explicitly opposed Giovanni Gentile, both as a political figure and as the 'philosopher of Fascism.'** As anti-Gentileans, Evola and those with whom he most readily identified rejected the humanism of Gentile's Actualism, as well as its moral opposition to anti-Semitism and biological racism."*

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

The fact that Mr. Eco is an exponent of the idea that "Traditionalist" thinkers were to be found among Fascist thought is quite ironic, since **Fascism found itself amongst: radical anti-traditionalists, revolutionary syndicalists, and former socialists**; and was mainly guided by a strictly revolutionary left wing line of philosophers be it: Sergio P'anunzio, Ugo Spirito, Alfredo Rocco, Nicola Bombacci, etc...

Not only was that the case, but **Mussolini would also engage in a gradual process of reformation within Fascist Italy that was meant to purge the Traditionalist elements of the regime and achieve his Ethical Totalitarian State through a Social Republic.**

Fascist Italy can be divided into three periods: Heroic Capitalism (1922-1932), Corporate State (1932-1943) and State Socialism (1943-1945).

“Recently, however, there has been some suggestion of change. In the immediate past, Otto-Ernst Schueddekopf identified Italian Fascism as a ‘dictatorship for development.’ Earlier still, Mary Matossian characterized Mussolini’s Fascism as animated by an ‘ideology of delayed industrialization,’ a belief system calculated to husband the population of Italy from the stage of first industrialization to its conclusion. If, in fact, Fascism was a developmental regime, and its ideology a developmental belief system, could it not be accommodated in our preliminary schematization without theoretical tension?...

Certainly the aristocratic elements of the traditional society persisted into the Fascist period, and they were notably absent in the Bolshevik case. But their presence or absence might well constitute nothing more than an historic irrelevance in terms of Fascism’s general developmental program. The Fascists, as distinct from the Bolsheviks, found themselves in a political environment in which many elements of the pre-Fascist polity (including the aristocracy) still enjoyed considerable political power. There is little to suggest that Fascism could have embarked upon its developmental program, much less acceded to power, without making accommodations for those still vital elements. It is clear that Fascism, prior to the March on Rome, recognized the need of nonmovement allies. With equal clarity Fascists understood that a protracted class war could only impede their program, just as it had impeded the Bolshevik program. The difference was that the Fascists understood their historic charge-the rapid modernization and industrialization of a retarded socioeconomic system-while the Bolsheviks were still hobbled by the commitment to an inappropriate form of Marxism designed for revolution in a postindustrial environment.

A better case, it would seem, could be made for Italian Fascism as a developmental system-supported by an ideology rooted in classical Marxism, but adapted to the demands of contemporary development. When Fascists spoke of 'economic expansion,' the 'need to industrialize,' 'accumulate capital,' 'rationalize the means of production,' introduce 'technological innovation' to increase per capita production, expand the "managerial functions" of the state, modify traditional attitudes toward organization, and integrate labor under the 'unitary discipline of the state corporations,' they were clearly speaking the language of developmental politics."

A. James Gregor - Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship

It has often been argued that the last part of Mussolini's regime was a mere faux-appeal to the proletariat and a way to larp as a Socialist, however, this was disproved by former Italian Fascists like Rutilio Sermonti and it was disproved by academics like A. James Gregor in works such as Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship. From these primary and secondary sources, we can see that Italy was engaging in a series of reforms that were directed towards State Socialism. This can be also tracked throughout Mussolini's speeches as well.

For more on this, [here's an article worth checking out...](#)

Mussolini saw Traditions as an instrument of the State that could be used to attract significant individuals and major voting blocs that could guarantee power for Fascism. His concessions towards reactionary forces in his regime earned him the 1943 Coup that gave away for the Italian Civil War. This would be recognized by Mussolini as one of his main mistakes, since, although he was on a path of reformation, he never truly achieved his Totalitarian State and had to rush the process during the Italian Social Republic, in which he was still subjugated by the Germans...

"He (Mussolini) announced that he intended to found the 'anti-party', that is the combat beams, an organ of action and agitation for the whole peninsula,

destined to turn against both right-wing misoneism and the destructive ambitions of the Leninist left."

Gioacchino Volpe – Genesis of Fascism

The concept of conserving the past was rejected by Mussolini; most of his policies sought to establish power for Fascism alone. And not only that, **he would consistently declare his opposition to the concept of Right and Left Wing**, since he saw Fascism as a pragmatic government destined to rule at its own pace with its own goals (a Third Position, or as he would say, “on the Top of the Centre)

*"Fascism, which sits on the Right—although in fact we could be placed at the **top of the Centre**—is reactionary towards Socialism, which, even if it sits on the Left, is today typically bourgeois, one might even say conservative and reactionary...*

These words (R & L) do not have a fixed and immutable meaning: they have variables and are conditioned by the circumstances of time, place and spirit. We Fascists completely ignore these empty terms and above all despise those who are terrified by these words."

Benito Mussolini – Clichés: Left and Right

*“My formula of 1925 is the same as today: all power to Fascism and exclusively to Fascism! The Revolution, which spared its enemies in 1922, today lines them up quietly against the wall, and will do likewise tomorrow. Today, therefore, it is stronger. How many of our enemies claim that there is no real revolution until the firing squads can take note of it. The Revolution that was unitary since the Congress of Rome of 1921, has remained such and will remain such: that is its incomparable strength. Jacobins, Girondins, Thermidorians, **Right and Left, are unknown terminologies in the Fascist Regime**”*

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, October 27, 1930

“Mussolini did not seize power. That was the Fascist version of history. He was given power by the King. Nor was Fascism a bourgeois counterrevolution against the working class. That was the Marxist version of history. The Fascists opposed the bourgeoisie as much as they opposed the Socialists because both exalted one class at the expense of the other. The Fascists exalted the nation, united not divided.

The popular definition of Fascism as right-wing is misleading even though Mussolini in 1922 described it as ‘of the right’. The intellectual driving force behind it was left-wing. Most Fascists had either been Socialists or syndicalists. However right-wing the manifestations of Fascism became, its guiding star was always left. Its opposition to Socialism might be described as right-wing, its republican tendencies leftwing. Its opposition to the principle of parliamentary democracy might be described as right-wing, its opposition to the undemocratic reality of the Italian parliament left-wing. Its defense of private property was right-wing but its support for the big state to bridle Capitalism — its Corporate State— left-wing...

It was the Fascists who made popular the phrase Third Way between the first and second ways, Capitalism and Socialism, to describe their Corporate State which would ensure class collaboration and end class war. Mussolini would write, The force of Fascism consists of this: that it takes from all programmes the vital part and has the force to put them into practice.”

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

II

Rejection of Modernism

“The Doctrine of Fascism understands human life as a struggle in the name of principles of a superior ethic, through which it affirms the prominent spiritual motives; the value of culture in all its forms, religious, artistic, scientific, the importance of education and labor, the preeminence of all moral forces and a responsible spirit.”

National Fascist Party - Dictionary of Politics

*“**Fascism, by and large, was modernist.** The Futurists, who exalted speed and the machine, had helped create and sustain it. Its core support came not just from the piccolo borghese but from the dispossessed and its core ideas came from the avant-garde. **Fascism attracted and allowed all sorts of avanguardisti.** Mario Sironi, scandalously not reckoned so but unquestionably among the great painters and sculptors of the twentieth century, and also the political cartoonist of *Il Popolo d'Italia*, was an ardent Fascist. He wanted to create a modern art which was a synthesis of the classical and the modern — just what Fascism wanted to do with the Italians.”*

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

Having the author recognize the fact that Fascism did embrace a certain degree of Modernism saves us a good chunk of work—nevertheless, he does say that it was merely a rejection of the enlightenment in order to return to a former way of thinking (in order to bypass the Enlightenment). **That being said, everything for a Fascist (a movement that wanted a “new Fascist future”, as explained before) was about returning to a certain mentality.**

As obvious as this should be, the fact of the matter is that **Fascism wanted to create its own Enlightenment and impose its own Modernity—removing the inherently damaging consequences of liberal materialism that had separated the spirit of people from the masses.** It sought to shape material circumstances to its advantage by way of imposing a Fascist rationale upon economic processes.

Despite the fact that Fascism cheered spiritual progress wherever it could be seen in the national tradition (such as in the works of the poet Dante Alighieri or in the scientific spirit of Giordano Bruno), **it also embodied a modernist spirit that sought to free man from medieval culture.**

This is the main issue with the interpretation of Umberto Eco is that he disregards the fact that Fascism, although opposed to modernity in the liberal sense, didn't seek the complete destruction of it. Fascism was prepared to adopt modernism insofar as it remained spiritually revolutionary and fulfilling in the brand new society of il Libro e moschetto.

*“This political culture, communal, anti-individualistic, and anti-rationalistic, represented at first a rejection of the heritage of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and later the creation of a comprehensive alternative, an intellectual, moral, and political framework that alone could ensure the perpetuity of a human collectivity in which all strata and all classes of society would be perfectly integrated... Fascism wished to rectify the most disastrous consequences of the modernization of the European continent and to provide a solution to the atomization of society, its fragmentation into antagonistic groups, and the alienation of the individual in a free market economy. Fascism rebelled against the dehumanization that modernization had introduced into human relationships, but it was also very eager to retain the benefits of progress and never advocated a return to a hypothetical golden age. Fascism rebelled against modernity in as much as modernity was identified with the rationalism, optimism, and humanism of the eighteenth century, **but it was not a reactionary or an antirevolutionary movement in the Maurrassian sense of***

the term. Fascism presented itself as a revolution of another kind, a revolution that sought to destroy the existing political order and to uproot its theoretical and moral foundations but that at the same time wished to preserve all the achievements of modern technology. It was to take place within the framework of the industrial society, fully exploiting the power that was in it.”

The Birth of Fascist Ideology - Zeev Sternhell

In the Fascist conception, depravity doesn't begin with modernity, and the deprivation of modernity is seen as a corruption of an already corrupted world—not really freeing the medieval mindset of its chains, but attaching it to new ones. **Thus, the supposed “return to Tradition” that is applied to the Fascism is bogus.** Once again, we delve into the organic quality of Fascism, and that is, regardless of this association between Traditionalism and Fascism, **every single policy is determined by the utility it has for the State and whether it achieves the Socialist Nationalism it seeks to establish** (In the Fichtean sense of Socialism).

To a degree, **we could rightfully call Fascism a form of rule-based utilitarianism, wherein results are measured according to the extent to which they increase the power of the state.** In order to understand this, we must know certain aspects of the Fascist Lexicon.

“We think that the State is the same personality of the individual, stripped of accidental differences, removed from the abstract concern of particular interests, not seen and not evaluated in the general system in which their reality and the possibility of their effective guarantee are; personality brought back and concentrated in their deepest consciousness: where the individual feels the general interest as his own, and therefore wants it as a general will. This profound awareness that each of us realizes and must realize within ourselves as a national consciousness in its dynamism, with its juridical form,

in its political activity, this very basis of our individuality, this is the State. And to conceive it outside the moral life is to deprive the individual himself of the substance of his morality. The ethical state of the fascist is no longer - of course - the agnostic state of old liberalism. Its ethics is spirituality: personality, which is awareness; system, which is will. And system means thought, program. It means the story of a people gathered in the living fire of a current and active conscience. It means the concept of what one is, what one can and must be: it means mission and purpose, in general and in particular, remote and close, mediated and immediate, all determined. The state is the great will of the nation; and therefore great intelligence. Nothing ignores; and he does not consider himself extraneous to anything that touches the citizen's interest, which is his interest: neither economically nor morally. Nihil humani a se alienum putat. The state is neither a grand facade nor an empty building: it is man himself; the house built, inhabited, and enlivened by the joy and pain of work and the whole life of the human spirit."

Giovanni Gentile - What is Fascism?

The above passage touches upon the eternal spirit that Fascism displayed. It places a high value in developmentalism, progressivism, and constant change based on a reciprocity of social and political factors. The duty of the people is to build each other up and place value in their own spiritual enlightenment—it is not some half-baked dream of materialism from the history of ideas.

Fascism opposed the ideas explored in earlier times out of a pragmatic and idealist approach to the world, hence it's determination to build up its own rationale and its own proper-spiritual thinking in its citizens, which is different from what could be called "over-intellectualism", i.e. **being a dilettante** or a "leterato" (those who embody what would be called static thought (or "pensiero pensato") in Actual Idealist terms).

(For a greater overview of Fascism and Modernism, please refer to Roger Griffin's book on the matter...)

III

Action for action's sake: Irrationalism

"Anti-Intellectualism does not mean, as some ignorant Fascists seem to believe, that they are authorized by the Duce to dismiss science and philosophy. It does not mean that one denies the value of thought and those superior expressions of culture through which thought expresses itself. Spiritual reality is a synthesis, in whose unity one finds expression and value in that thought that is action. In the conclusive unity of that synthesis converge, and must converge, and know that they converge, many elements without which the synthesis would be empty, operating in a void"

Giovanni Gentile - Origins and Doctrine of Fascism

*"Fascism is war on Intellectualism. The fascist spirit is will, not intellect; and I hope I will not be misunderstood. **Fascist intellectuals must not be intellectuals. fascism is and should be an enemy without truce or pity, not against intelligence, but against intellectualism which is a disease of intelligence.** For intelligence too is will, and fascism at least feels this, disdaining the culture that is an ornament or adornment of the brain and longing for a culture by which the spirit is armed and fortified for winning ever new battles. And this may be, this should be our barbarity, a barbarity moreover of intellectuals! Against science and above all against philosophy; but, of course, against the science and philosophy of decadents, of the spineless, of those who always stand at the window and are satisfied to criticize as if it were no affair of theirs!"*

Giovanni Gentile

"Still, fascism is not a religion or philosophy in the usual sense. This is the second point: fascism is an attitude toward action. It keeps life whole and treats it as a unity. It responds to circumstances, without tying the future up in

great knots of long-term planning. Though fascism is anti-intellectual, it does not neglect science and philosophical rigor. Spirituality pulls together all pieces of life in thoughts that become actions. Fascism opposes a theoretical stance toward life. People who refuse to get involved in solving everyday problems are just bad citizens. They will be driven out. Fascism opposes that cultural decadence that robs citizens of commitment to the trials the nation faces. Decadence makes of citizens mere spectators. That is what intellectualism does. One sees the up and down, the good and bad, in everything, and takes a passive stance. Hence, fascism spends little time theorizing. It is busy doing things. Theory is a wan ally in reform. Fascism's mantra is life, not system or idea. So, some call fascism a method rather than a theory."

[Summary of Origins and Doctrine of Fascism](#)

"Intellectualism", as Fascism understands it, is the prevention of the synthesis between Thought and Action. It represents thoughtless action and actionless thought—never allowing for the dialectic to complete itself into a definitive synthesis. This largely consists of armchair intellectualism and contrarianism, as those who purely engage in thought will never embody what they think and they will never push for establishing it in real life.

The silly idea that **Fascists were all about blood and violence has been nothing but slander** by the usual dogmatic materialists, who deny the truth of any Third Position that doesn't go along with their wacky philosophical standpoint—thus we see armchair intellectuals: claiming to understand the "irrational" nature of Fascism while ignoring the amount of intellectuals behind the movement itself, figures such as: Giovanni Gentile (a personality that would inspire a generation of philosophers), Alfredo Rocco, Sergio Panunzio, Ugo Spirito, and Nicola Bombacci.

Let me tell you this, **none of them had sympathy for traditionalism, let alone cried about returning to the past**, figures such as: Sergio Panunzio, who saw Fascism as the highest realization of Marxism; Nicola Bombacci,

who believed that the actions of Mussolini were in line with the Marxist-Leninist dialectic. Bombacci would aid Fascist thought by bringing mainstream Communists into the fold, individuals such as Giovanni Bitelli, Federico Giannini, Dino Fiorelli, Mario Guarnieri, Bruno Ricci, Sigfrido Barghini and Alibrando Giovannetti. Oh, and let us not forget how Giovanni Gentile, the main philosopher of Fascism, believed that—**not only did fascist doctrine achieve the only feasible form of Socialism—but Fascist Philosophy had become a form of Practical Marxism**. Surely this was a Traditionalist ideology that complained of the loss of Traditional Values! **Fascism would seek constant change in Italian Society, rejecting any ties to the past and embracing whatever change may happen due to the dynamic nature of humans.**

As we can see, it's not even that hard to grasp the Fascist understanding of "intellectualism". What it amounted to was simply a rejection of remaining in your chair and not putting the money where your mouth is. Fascism as a whole adhered to the motto that: *"the Book and the Rifle makes the Perfect Fascist"*. For a reason, being a brute is not enough and neither is being a wimp. And what happens when you mix both? You get the ideal that Fascism aims for, a mixture of Thought and Action, which is why Italy had as one of its main legislative priorities: Education reform and programs to improve the health of Italians (mainly through encouraging athleticism)..

"The ethical state was to be realized not only by promulgating new laws or by creating new institutions but above all by fostering a new spirit. To accomplish this goal, fascism had to make use of all the agencies of the state, most especially the schools. Fascism was not a dogma but a "continuing revolution of the spirit of the nation," and education had a crucial role to play in that revolution.

The application of Gentilian notions to education consisted first of all in a rejection of the prevailing positivist trends in Italian pedagogy that emphasized the need for a lay school (an "agnostic" school, according to Gentile) and the development of scientific instruction..."

Tracy H. Koon - Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943

“Is Fascism therefore ‘anti-intellectual,’ as has been so often charged? It is eminently anti-intellectual, eminently Mazzinian, that is, if by intellectualism we mean the divorce of thought from action, of knowledge from life, of brain from heart, of theory from practice. Fascism is hostile to all Utopian systems which are destined never to face the test of reality. It is hostile to all science and all philosophy which remain matters of mere fancy or intelligence. It is not that Fascism denies value to culture, to the higher intellectual pursuits by which thought is invigorated as a source of action.

*Fascist anti-intellectualism holds in scorn a product peculiarly typical of the educated classes in Italy: the *letterato*—the man who plays with knowledge and with thought without any sense of responsibility for the practical world. It is hostile not so much to culture as to bad culture, the culture which does not educate, which does not make men, but rather creates pedants and aesthetes, egotists in a word, men morally and politically indifferent. It has no use, for instance, for the man who is ‘above the conflict’ when his country or its important interests are at stake.*

By virtue of its repugnance for ‘intellectualism,’ Fascism prefers not to waste time constructing abstract theories about itself. But when we say that it is not a system or a doctrine we must not conclude that it is a blind praxis or a purely instinctive method. If by system or philosophy we mean a living thought, a principle of universal character daily revealing its inner fertility and significance, then Fascism is a perfect system, with a solidly established foundation and with a rigorous logic in its development; and all who feel the truth and the vitality of the principle work day by day for its development, now doing, now undoing, now going forward, now retracing their steps, according as the things they do prove to be in harmony with the principle or to deviate from it.”

Giovanni Gentile - The Philosophic Basis of Fascism

IV

Disagreement is Treason

“How must we deal with non-Fascists? There are citizens who are not members of the party, but are honest, disciplined workers. They must be respected. There are others who seek to damage Fascism: these must be mercilessly combated.”

A Diary of the Will

“Il Secolo, a leading anti- Fascist daily, for example, noted on 4 November, ‘There isn’t a party or political movement in Italy in which there are, as in Fascism, so many currents which flow in opposite directions, each one acting for itself, with no respect either for discipline, or central leadership.’ “

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

As explained before, **criticism was actually something Mussolini enjoyed and even sought out in order to achieve consent from the population.** The idea that Fascism was merely a totalizing idea with little to no disagreement on the interpretations of it is ridiculous—**there were a number of dissenting individuals that would disagree with one another within the regime.** Not only is that the case, but **Mussolini would go on to include several critics of his government among his circle.** On this topic, we could also go over the different branches that separated within the Fascist Party, which was ultimately in opposition to the path of action that each individual wanted, be it: Gentile, Ugo Spirito, Marinetti, Alfredo Rocco, Sergio Panunzio, Niccolo Giani, Berto Ricci, De Vecchi, etc... **The diversity of thought within the Fascist Regime is surprisingly wide, since the Fascist Party encompassed a variety of thinkers with different leanings.**

The idea that Fascism merely engaged in violence out of mere call to action

and emerged as a blood-thirsty death cult is also flawed, **since it was not Fascists that started violence across Italy.** The Red Terror was already in place before the appearance of the Squadristo that characterized Italian Fascism. As Mussolini would say in 1921:

"For Fascists, violence is not a caprice... It is not art for art's sake. It is understood to be a surgical necessity. A doleful necessity... For us, violence is an exception, not a method, or a system."

The regime, as exposed by OVRA archives and several historians, was (sadly for the slanderers of Fascism), barely oppressive with opposing currents to Fascism.

"It was the OVRA which provided the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State with most of its work. Between 1927 and 1929, 5046 people came before the tribunal of whom one-fifth were convicted. It sentenced one to death, six to twenty-five-thirty years in prison, forty-two to fifteen-twentyfive years, 370 to five-fifteen years. But this was all very small indeed compared with the appalling atrocities inflicted on their citizenry by other dictatorships whether of the right or the left..."

Like Communism, Fascism regarded violence as morally justifiable in certain circumstances other than in self-defence or as capital punishment. Engels had called violence a purifying force and Sorel, the Marxist revisionist and revolutionary syndicalist whose influence on Mussolini had been profound, had said that correctly used violence was moral and creative. The Futurists, whose ideas permeated Fascism, had exalted 'aggression...the slap and the fist' in their original manifesto of 1909 and described war as 'the only hygiene in the world'. But once Fascism was in power, a Fascist terror was unnecessary.

By 1930 squadristo had virtually disappeared. Between 1930 and 1934, the OVRA, the secret political police, arrested 6000 political opponents, mostly Communists or members of Giustizia e Libertà, the non-party revolutionary movement which aimed to stir up armed insurrection against Fascism founded by Carlo Rosselli in October 1929 — an average of 125 a month. But few of those arrested went to prison. During the 1930s the Special Tribunal imprisoned no more than several dozen political prisoners a year, though the

numbers increased in the second half of the decade — 310 in 1938 and 365 in 1939. Three people in all were executed during the 1930s for plotting to assassinate Mussolini.”

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

The fact of the matter is that Fascism ruled for 20 years across Italy seeking agreement despite being composed of a wide range of beliefs. It wasn't merely a madman crushing opposition left to right, but a man getting rid of subversive elements, only to be left with what may contribute to the development of Fascist Doctrine. **If anything we could call Fascism an achievement of a Permanent Revolution, not in the sense of Trotsky, but in the sense of constant change and improvement.**

“Italian Fascism proposed the theory of Permanent Revolution, which it pretended to carry out as an ideological model in a gradual way. In the history of revolutionary movements, Fascism was the one that declared that it was impossible to pre-emptively adopt an institutional entity that was stable—be it monarchy or republic. On the contrary, the ideological basis of the Corporative Ethical State can't be identified with an institution or a certain historic moment. For Fascism, these were just a means to an end. Therefore, if an institution becomes anachronistic, it should be substituted with another one. Mussolini said in 1917: ‘Revolution is not chaos, disorder or collapse of activities like the stupid extremists say. Revolution is an order that replaces another order, a hierarchy that takes the place of another’. Mussolini did not have as an objective a monarchic Fascism, since, sooner or later, one of the two would prevail. The relations were hostile, in the same way they were with the Left and Right.”

Marco Piraino & Stefano Fiorito - Fascist Identity

Fascism is not a doctrine that seeks to stagnate into one single dogma, on the contrary, it aimed to get rid of dogmas and pursued discussion across

different points of view, as the regime had a wide variety of thinkers that would oftentimes disagree with one another. This is why Mussolini had to adopt a role of consensus-building, which, for better or for worse, led to his downfall in 1943. After this, he would realize that, despite his softness with certain elements, he was stabbed in the back by the sword of Damocles.

“All dictators have always made slaughter of their enemies. I have been the only mild one: a few hundred dead against several thousand. I believe I've ennobled dictatorship. Perhaps I emasculated it, but I rid it of instruments of torture. Stalin sits on a mountain of human bones. Is this bad? I don't regret to have done all the good I've done, even to my adversaries, even enemies who plotted against my life. I've done this through the provision of subsidies that were so frequent as to become stipends, as well as by saving their lives. But if tomorrow they will kill my men, what responsibility will I have for having spared them?”

Last Testament of Benito Mussolini

V

Fascism is Racist by Definition

This is where the issue gets tricky. Many depend on Mussolini saying, *"Race! It is a feeling, not a reality: ninety-five percent, at least, is a feeling. ... National pride has no need of the delirium of race."*

To those who say this: I must warn those who believe in the aforementioned quote that this is a reduction of Mussolini's views on Race, and as far as the evidence for this goes, I can refer to his 1919 Article called "[The Accomplices](#)" or his 1934 "[Is the White Race Dying?](#)".

The matter can be definitely settled when one refers to a collection of the statements he made to the importance of Race throughout his regime, as collected by Arturo Sabatini called "[The Concept of Race in Fascism](#)". **The issue comes into play when one believes that the racial views of Mussolini were backed by Doctrine.** If we look deeper, his constant contradiction and lack of racial policies up until the influence of National Socialism indicate that **Fascism's Racialism was not political and lacked existence in the doctrine.** If anything, it would be different from an understanding of Race in the modern day. The reality is that **Fascism lacked much concern for Race as a whole, up until its political inclusion later on in the regime (due to German influence).**

The Political Racialism of Fascism would be criticized by important figures, such as Giovanni Gentile and many of the Actualists within the regime. People such as Italo Balbo (possible successor of Mussolini) would take harsh opposition against it, and institutions such as the CAUR (Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalita di Roma) would always take a harsh stance against any sort of racial understanding of Fascism, preaching its universality instead. Throughout the Moutreux Congresses, which could be deemed as a "Fascist Internationale", a series of discussions on racial topics and anti-semitism would take place, all of them taking a critical stance towards Racism and

German National Socialism. One of the main reasons as to why these congresses would fail would be due to the constant infighting among its members.

We could also take a closer inspection of the notes that other Fascist authors would write on Anti-Semitism and the Racial views of Italy, which, pretty much summarize a point I want to make in order to laugh at this awful claim.

“ ‘But Mussolini is not anti-Semitic. You rejoice in vain,’ whispered the Jewish press into our ears. It is not a matter of what we rejoice in say I, it is a question of why you Jews are sad at his victory, if he is not anti-Semitic. What is the rationale of the worldwide attack on him by the Jewish press? Italy has as many Jews as Romania has Ciangai [a quite minor ethnic group] in the Siret valley. An Italian anti-Semitic movement would be as if Romanians started a movement against the Ciangai. But had Mussolini lived in Romania he could not but be anti-Semitic, for Fascism means first of all defending your nation against the dangers that threaten it. it means the destruction of these dangers and the opening of a free way to life and glory for your nation.”

Cornelio Codreanu - For My Legionaries

This is what should be understood about Fascism: it is first and foremost pragmatic. **Racial views in Italy would have been futile.** Racialism was foreign to the Italian theory of Fascism and was far from being actual praxis for such a country. **Fascism would also go on to oppose the racially imperialist conception of the British.**

*“Italian Imperialism, unlike Anglo-Saxon imperialism, did not have as its only motive to conquer markets to place surpluses of finished products and obtain raw materials, differentiated rather because of its emphasis on demographic colonization. That is, the conquest of lands beyond the borders of Italy was to place a surplus population... Economic policy, in this context, had several convergent objectives. **First, to value the colonies by integrating them into***

the metropolis, not only economically but as a demographic-cultural extension of the peninsula.”

Giuseppe De Corso - The Economic Policies of Italian Fascism Between 1922 and 1943: Brief Considerations Towards its Understanding

Fascism aimed at considering the people in their colonies, as parts of Italy and members of their countries through a slow process of inclusion and education. Italian Fascism was as Racist as it was Anti-Racist—its doctrine often preached otherwise, so did many within the regime, and **the actions of a few barely represented the ideas and goals of Fascism**. Everything ended up practically subordinate to Mussolini rather than the ideals of Racialism that were being preached beyond the Alps. **Even concepts such as the “Spiritual Racism” of Evola would be rejected by a majority of Fascists across the regime, and ultimately, his works were foreign to the doctrine and he would openly change parts of his works so as to not be seen as a subversive element in the regime.**

“Fascist “racism” throughout the period between 1922 and 1938, however distinctive, was essentially benign—and shared little, if any substance, with the malevolent racism so prevalent across the Alps. None of the major Fascist intellectuals were racists of the sort one found in National Socialist environs. In fact, since many, if not most, of the principal ideologues of Fascism were Actualists, they had principled objections to attributing human behavior to material—that is, biological—causes. They simply could not accept the proposition that an entire population, characterized by ill-defined ‘racial’ traits, could be held, as a body, guilty of anything... The fact is that at the time of the publication of Evola’s Sintesi, the most serious students of raciation and comparative psychology in Fascist Italy dismissed his ideas as ‘bizarre . . . occult anti-scientific fantasies.’ Evola had early been identified by Fascist critics as a ‘lucid madman,’ who was not to be taken seriously...”

Mussolini believed that he had no option but to follow Germany into a conflict that he hoped would be of very short duration. Under the circumstances, it became critical to reduce the ideological distance between the two regimes.

Fascist race theory would have to speak to the issues of Aryans and Jews—something, until that time, that standard race theory in Mussolini's Italy did not do. Mussolini, by overtly addressing issues that were central to National Socialist thought, sought to have Hitler's Germany take Fascist Italy more seriously. That would serve Fascism's immediate and general purposes."

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

VI

Appeal to a Frustrated Middle Class (a class suffering from an economic crisis or feelings of political humiliation, and frightened by the pressure of lower social groups)

*“Hard times also attracted those to Fascism who felt that Socialism could not provide an answer. According to La Stampa, Fascism comprised unemployed former officers, poverty-stricken public employees, slump-hit shopkeepers and contractors, students and young graduates, disaffected youths and ex-revolutionaries who had supported the war. According to a November 1921 census in Il Popolo d’Italia, **24.3 per cent were agricultural labourers, 15 per cent factory workers, 13 per cent students, 12 per cent owner or tenant farmers, and the rest a mix of shopkeepers, traders, professionals and factory owners.** Nearly two-thirds had served in the war, which also meant that they were young. These figures undermine the claim that Fascism was simply a bourgeois counter-revolution.”*

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

*“The Fascist flirtation with Futurism, which glorified the city, violence, speed, industry and the machine, and its bear hug with the (essentially urban) bourgeoisie which it despised, was not as strong as its deeper romance with the countryside. The countryside was where Mussolini — and the majority of Italians — came from; it was his terra natale. **The support of farmers and peasants had been why Fascism achieved such swift success before the March on Rome.**”*

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

“It was not just the property owners who turned to Fascism for help. Fascism also appealed to workers who did not have the party and union card and were thus excluded from the factory or the farm by the closed shop. Fascism had been a city phenomenon up until now. But the majority of those who had

fought in the war were 'contadini' — peasants (the Italian word 'contadino' does not have the same negative ring to it as the English 'peasant'). During the winter of 1920-1 Fascism spread like wildfire through the Italian countryside. Mussolini had found his 'trincerocrazia' at last."

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

*"Not only has capitalism not entered into its final crisis anywhere in the world, but Fascism was first successful in marginally industrialized Italy— in a nation that had only begun its industrial development. Italian industrial capitalism was hardly at the end of its life cycle. It was a little more. Moreover, subsequent movements elsewhere in Europe that have been characterized as fascist proved to have **been most successful in mobilizing the lower classes in underdeveloped . . . countries.**" "*

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

The silly belief that Fascism was merely appealing to a middle class is ridiculous when one considers the background of most Fascist leaders and the consistency of the groups that constituted the initial blackshirts.

Not only did the Fascists engage in strikes and land occupations, but they were mostly backed by peasants and farmers. We can see this with the revolutionary left wing background of the party, in figures such as: Aurelio Padovani, Edmondo Rossoni, The De Ambris Brothers (Alceste and Amilcare), Roberto Farinacci, Michele Bianchi, etc...

The initial appeal of Fascism was directed towards the working class and it would remain this way throughout the regime. The initial Liberal policies and talking points of Mussolini were a mere power move in order to consolidate itself. As many authors point out, after 1925, the regime takes a step towards a Fascist conception of economics through the Labour Charter, the introduction of the Corporate State, the reform of representatives in the legislative branches and the organization of corporations, and the land

distribution that would take place throughout the regime (which contradicts a common belief held among Marxist circles).

“The complex of policies that made up autarchy won much less than complete approval from Italy’s economic and industrial elite, for it had brought increasing state control, Fascistization, and a foreign policy oriented toward military activism. As Renzo De Felice has written, the economic elite became increasingly alarmed because of “a) the Fascist state’s tendency to interfere and expand its own control over economic activity; b) the Fascist elite’s tendency to transform itself into an autonomous ruling class and gradually to alter the balance of compromise to its advantage; c) Mussolini’s foreign policy which became increasingly aggressive and therefore correspondingly less attuned to the true interests both of Italy and of the upper bourgeoisie itself. Moreover, autarchy produced a new emphasis on “worker Fascism,” with an expansion in the role and activism of the worker syndicates. There was an increase in worker fringe benefits (though not much increase in wages), and in 1939 the huge Dopolavoro recreation program was transferred from the party to the syndicates themselves.”

Stanley G. Payne - A History of Fascism 1914-1945

For Mussolini, it had been Marxists and left-wingers who had betrayed Socialism and had failed to support the lower-classes, and even Lenin would be criticized through this standpoint.

"The developed and conscious proletariat is shouting 'Long live Lenin!', thinking that they are shouting 'Long live socialism!'. They do not realize that they are actually crying 'Down with socialism!' The false shepherds are deceiving the masses, who are ready to swear by and die for the new and distant ideals, believing that what has been established in Russia is socialism. This is a colossal lie!... There is not even the beginnings of socialism; there is nothing resembling a socialist regime. Leninism is the perfect negation of socialism. It is the government of a new caste of politicians."

Benito Mussolini - The Accomplices

"Light is no longer shining from the East, where terrible news of death and famine is coming out of Russia; we are receiving desperate appeals by socialists and anarchists in Petrograd against Lenin's reactionary policies."

Benito Mussolini - Which Way is the World Going

"Fascism has made grandiose Social Revolution, Mussolini and Lenin, Soviet and Fascist corporate state, Rome and Moscow. Several stands already taken had to be rectified, we have nothing of which to ask pardon for as both in present and past we are impelled by the same ideal: the triumph of work."

Nicola Bombacci - La Verita

VII

At the root of the Ur-Fascist psychology there is the obsession with a plot, possibly an international one.

This claim is goofy in and of itself. **At the root of EVERY ideology, there's a pathological view of setting up an "us" and "them".** No matter what ideology you look for, Anarchists, Communists, Libertarians, Theocrats, Social-Democrats, etc... **The appeal of a fight against a group that represents "the opposition" (be it foreign or internal) will always exist.**

The truth of the matter is, that when it comes to Fascism and its interpretations, the Italian interpretation depended upon a Dialectic established by thinkers such as Enrico Corradini and the believers of Socialism of Nations (keep in mind, this is before Fascism came to existence). **This line of thinking supported and endorsed Syndicalism and a State that pursues unity above all else, in a struggle of Proletariat Nations against the ones that exploit and drain them of their resources.**

"While a firm sense of the unity of similars—the union of laborers in modern industry—was the foundation of what the syndicalists conceived as their community, Corradini argued that such a collective, in isolation, could neither prosper nor survive in the contemporary world. Corradini argued that as long as there were nations, workers would constitute only a functional part of an historic and organic whole. Any class, in isolation, could not survive in the contemporary world.

In the world at the beginning of the twentieth century, Corradini maintained, only nations could serve as international actors. The world, almost all nationalists argued, was an arena of Darwinian struggle for survival. If Italian workers expected to survive and prosper in such a world, they required entrepreneurs, functionaries, merchants, financiers, intellectuals, educators, and state officials. Once syndicalists understood that, Corradini concluded, they could only become advocates and practitioners of a national

syndicalism—a revolutionary syndicalism that nationalists could wholeheartedly support...

Corradini argued that 'proletarianism' had some singular merits in the Italian environment. He reminded the domestic leaders of the proletariat that for a quarter of a century Italian workers had been forced to leave their homeland to work in lands more prosperous—'capitalist' lands. Emigrant Italian workers throughout the advanced industrial nations were compelled to submit to the overlordship of foreign capitalists in order to simply survive. Corradini suggested that the distinctions that the syndicalists recognized within Italy were much more emphatic outside of Italy. If domestic capitalists were seen as oppressors, they were of negligible consequence compared to the world dominance of the capitalists of the advanced industrial nations. The advanced capitalist nations maintained an abiding and exacting control over an impoverished "proletarian" Italy. Even if a proletarian class revolution overthrew Italy's impoverished bourgeoisie, Italy itself would remain a proletarian nation subject to the dominance of foreign plutocracies...

Almost from the very commencement of his political activity, Corradini had insisted on the distinction between 'proletarian' and 'plutocratic' nations. Corradini contended that, given those conditions, the less developed nations were condemned to a threat of perpetual dependency on the plutocracies. England would forever command the seas and the financial markets—and France would dominate the Continent with its culture and its armed forces. Italy, capital and resource deficient, would subsist on the sufferance of wealthy nations. It would remain forever an economic and cultural colony of its 'superiors.' 'Rich nations' would forever dominate proletarian Italy."

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

This belief constitutes the evolution of Mussolini's dialectic between Producers and Parasites and applies it on an International Scale, which, far from being a mere plot, is more or less a dialectical understanding of the relationship between foreign policy and domestic policy.

If a nation has a boot on its neck, no matter what system the nation has adopted, **the boot will remain there unless/until there's this revolt of Proletariat Nation against Plutocratic Nations.** This is why Mussolini often calls Italy a "Proletariat and Fascist" Nation. Italian Fascism barely appealed to the notion of an international plot, but it more or less had a conception of foreign politics that is no different from any other ideology. (For more, refer to A. James Gregor's *Mussolini's Intellectuals*).

Blackshirts were filled with Italian Jews and, once again, the movement had received financing from Jewish Bankers. The political move of adopting racial policies led to negative effects upon Italy due to the fact that the rate of assimilation of Italian Jews had been the highest in Europe.

At the end of the day, this is one of the vague points that is present in EVERY SINGLE IDEOLOGY. **In every ideology, there's always a "scapegoat" or a group that represents an "us" or a "them" to fight against.**

Not to mention, **the Nationalist Conception and the Fascist conception of a country clearly differ if we take into account both the ideological writings and historical records of the academics and ideologues of Fascism** (this is further described in the explanation that Gentile gives on *The Fascist State as a Democratic State* in *Origins and Doctrine of Fascism*).

"This gigantic struggle is nothing other than a phase in the logical development of our revolution; it is the struggle of peoples that are poor but rich in workers against the exploiters who hold on ferociously to the monopoly of all the riches and all the gold of the earth; it is the struggle of the fertile and young people against the sterile people moving to the sunset; it is the struggle between two centuries and two ideas..."

Proletarian and Fascist Italy stands up a third time, strong, proud, and united as never before (the crowd cries with one single voice: "Yes!") . The single order of the day is categorical and obligatory for all. It already spreads and fires hearts from the Alps to the Indian Ocean; Victory! (The people break out into raucous cheers). And we will win, in order to finally give a long period of peace with justice to Italy, to Europe, and to the world."

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, June 10, 1940

VIII

The enemies are at the same time too strong and too weak

This is, yet again, another goofy point given the fact that, not only is it too vague, but it can apply to every single ideology, as was mentioned in the previous point. **This is just a mere ideological mechanism that has been in place and used by other ideologies, which plays into the fact that, for this man, the process of defining a term consists of throwing shit at the wall and seeing if it sticks.**

This is not even a doctrinal point but just something that is done. This does not constitute an ideological statement let alone doctrine or praxis, but is just something that is presented in such a way so that it comes off as slander.

Eco understands how to use rhetoric, but can't present it in such a way that shows a genuine understanding of the general outline of Fascism. He cannot account for how his point is present in every other ideology. Moreover, an enemy can be spiritually weak, yet possess the means to overpower you, and inversely, an enemy may lack the means to overpower you, yet may still be spiritually strong.

Ultimately, this is a dialectical proposition that barely characterizes the way in which Fascist Governments actually functioned. Rather, it simply refers to the dynamics of wartime conditions. It's funny, given the fact that **even the Allies did this during World War II against the Axis, using the exact same type of talking points and rhetoric:** "They are dumb yet a menace!", "They have the power yet have one ball!", "They want total war/are animals yet they are bozos!". Once again, refer to the last point for the same kind of rhetorical charade.



IX

For Fascism, Life is lived for a Struggle... This, however, brings about an Armageddon complex. Since enemies have to be defeated, there must be a final battle, after which the movement will have control of the world. But such a "final solution" implies a further era of peace, a Golden Age, which contradicts the principle of permanent war.

"Fascism, the more it considers and observes the future and the development of humanity, quite apart from political considerations of the moment, believes neither in the possibility nor the utility of perpetual peace"

Benito Mussolini - Doctrine of Fascism

"One cannot be a Fascist in politics and not a Fascist... in school, not a Fascist in one's family, not a Fascist in one's workplace. Just as the Catholic, if a Catholic, invests all of his life with his religious sentiment: and speaks and works, or remains still, thinks and meditates... as a Catholic. Similarly, the Fascist-whether he goes to parliament or remains in the local association, writes in the newspapers or reads them, provides for his own private life or converses with others, looks to the future or remembers his past and the past of his people-must always remind himself that he is a Fascist!

Thus is revealed that which truly can be said to be the defining trait of Fascism-to take life seriously. Life is labor, effort, sacrifice, and hard work-it is a life in which we well know that there is no pleasure. There is no time for pleasure. Before us there is always the ideal to be realized, an ideal that does not allow us rest. We cannot lose time. Even asleep, we are responsible for the talents that we have been given..."

Giovanni Gentile - What is Fascism?

This is, yet again, another misunderstanding of Eco on the doctrine of fascism. **He identifies certain rhetoric yet he fails to grasp the outline and praxis of how this thought developed.** This has been a constant flaw of the author that

has reoccurred ever since his claims on the “*Anti-Intellectualism of Fascism*”, which, even if he’s seeing the surface, he’s ignoring the background.

The desire for struggle in Fascism is that of the actualist doctrine and the constant evolution of thought and National/Individual Life. Even in speeches where Mussolini proclaims that Peace will happen after the defeat of the Allies, it is never mentioned that this era of peace will be eternal (let alone the goal of the struggle). “Peace” will be a victory for the Proletariat Nations for sure, yet it will only give away for new branches of struggle... for there are new conquests and goals that Humanity will work upon in the future!

Struggle is desirable, and it’s not a mere desire for war since, for Fascism, struggle starts from the conquest of the self up until the conquest of the stars. **This can be seen in whatever ideologue you look into**, which, once again showcases what we’ve been seeing from Eco: he looks at the surface, makes the claim, and acts scared—as he ignores the actual truth outside of his claims. Fascism, as a whole, is meant to be a Philosophy of Life—not just a political ideology, which is something that plays into Eco’s failure to apprehend Fascism. **Although the doctrine has a great interest in politics, it can also be separated from politics and adopted as a way to handle your personal life.**

*“The Center of the System. The third point is this: fascism is a **political method**. It declines to define itself rigorously because it is moving forward and developing...”*

Fascist writers deride philosophy, and are right to do so to the extent those philosophies present arid abstractions divorced from the breadth of life. Fascism is a philosophy, a philosophy of praxis. Its subject is how to get things done in the human community. Fascism is action. The fascist state is a person itself, with its own aims and style, independent of the citizens who are its members.”

[Summary of Origins and Doctrine of Fascism](#)

“The Fascist system is not a political system, but it has its center of gravity in politics. Fascism came into being to meet serious problems of politics in

post-war Italy. And it presents itself as a political method. But in confronting and solving political problems it is carried by its very nature, that is to say by its method, to consider moral, religious, and philosophical questions and to unfold and demonstrate the comprehensive totalitarian character peculiar to it. It is only after we have grasped the political character of the Fascist principle that we are able adequately to appreciate the deeper concept of life which underlies that principle and from which the principle springs. The political doctrine of Fascism is not the whole of Fascism. It is rather its more prominent aspect and in general its most interesting one.”

Giovanni Gentile - Philosophic Basis of Fascism

X

Elitism is a typical aspect of any reactionary ideology, insofar as it is fundamentally aristocratic, and aristocratic and militaristic elitism cruelly implies contempt for the weak... The Leader, knowing that his power was not delegated to him democratically but was conquered by force, also knows that his force is based upon the weakness of the masses.

“It could be an anti-Marxist socialism, for instance; a national socialism. The millions of workers who will return to the furrows of their fields after having lived in the furrows of the trenches will realize the synthesis of the antithesis: class and nation.”

Benito Mussolini - Trenchocracy

“Mussolini did away with democracy but he did not, like most dictators, use mass murder to retain power. There was no need. He and Fascism had mass appeal because unlike democracy, especially Italian democracy, they got things done and unlike democracy they transformed politics into a form of religion — from an isolated act involving the ballot box to a daily act of religious faith... Fascism was not, as the Left insisted, the creature of big business. It had mass appeal: in October 1922 membership of the PNF stood at 300,000 and a year later at 783,000. Nor was it, as the Left also insisted, financed by big business alone. Its money came from many different sources as De Felice has demonstrated beyond doubt. As Adrian Lyttelton has observed, ‘Mussolini was born into power on the shoulders of a mass movement.’ But it was not the mass movement which delivered power to Mussolini. He came to power as a result of a coup d’état which was unlike all other coups d’état for two reasons. First, all normal coups d’état involve the army, or a section of the army, taking matters into their own hands. This did not happen. Second, this coup d’état was legal: the King invited Mussolini to become prime minister. The King, interpreting the will of the nation, delivered the government to Mussolini — but not the state.”

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

"The interesting point (and a point that is invariably missed by all off-hand anti-Fascists) is that in this new kind of autocratic state, the autocrat actually seeks consent of his people. Far from "not giving a damn" whether the Italian people like Fascism, Mussolini is passionately desirous that his people should like Fascism and he has worked for twelve years to build up their liking in his own dictatorial way."

William Welk - Fascist Economic Policy

"From Germany I returned to Italy and dedicated myself to studying the subject of Fascism. My knowledge of Italian allowed me to penetrate, I would say deeply, into the foundations of the system, and that is how I discovered something that, from that social point of view, was very interesting at my view; Italian Fascism led popular organizations to effective participation in national life, from which the people had always been estranged. Until Mussolini's rise to power, the nation went one way and the worker another, and the latter had no participation in the former. I discovered the resurgence of corporations and studied them thoroughly.

Juan Domingo Perón (President of Argentina 1946-1955, 1973-1974)

"The worker who fulfills his social duty with no other hope than a piece of bread and the health of his family repeats, on a daily basis, an act of heroism. Labourers are infinitely superior to all false prophets who pretend to represent them. These false prophets have an easy time of it due to the insensitivity of those who have the sacrosanct duty of taking care of labourers. It is for this reason that I was, and am, a socialist.

The accusation of inconsistency is without foundation. My behaviour has always been consistent in the sense of looking to the substance, not the appearance of things. I have adapted myself, socialistically, to reality. As the natural development of society proved more and more of Marx's predictions to be wrong, true socialism retreated from the possible to the probable. The only

feasible socialism that can be truly implemented is Corporativism—a merging point, a place of equilibrium and justice, with respect for collective interests.”

The Last Testament of Benito Mussolini

This is straight up ironic since, as mentioned at the beginning, **Fascism conceives itself as a “Popular Democratic State”**. Mussolini, as is pointed out by historians, always looked for the consent and approval of the masses while he held power. Fascism had garnered mass support before its arrival to power and this explains its swift victory on the March on Rome. Fascism is Aristocratic in the belief that great men are going to lead masses to victory (refer to Trenchocracy), but it is also populist in its constant support for the working classes and the mass-appeal it had throughout the existence of the regime. Far from “Reactionary”, Fascism was in the pursuit of a Revolution of its own, one that would establish a new form of government as a Third Position separated from the old understandings of politics.

This idea that there must be contempt for the weak and lower classes is widely unsourced. Why?

Because Fascism advocates for valuing each and every single member of society, from someone that cleans the streets, up until someone working as a government member. It’s goal is to value all the work that is put into building the Nation.

“Fascism does not submerge the individual in the social group. It subordinates him, but does not eliminate him; the individual as a part of his generation ever remaining an element of society however transient and insignificant he may be. Moreover the development of individuals in each generation, when coordinated and harmonized, conditions the development and prosperity of the entire social unit.”

Alfredo Rocco - Political Doctrine of Fascism

The easiest and quickest way to rebut this point, is with the conception of Producers and Parasites, which was widely present among Fascist regimes such as those of Mussolini's and Juan Perón's. This dialectic conceives the Nation as a division of two sections: Producers, being the ones that work for the nation, that is everyone that takes part in National Life and contributes with whatever effort it can give; and Parasites, the ones that push for internal division and seek the subversion of the Nation for their own interests.

We can, of course, also refer to the conception that Gentile had of Fascism as a democratic state that employs authoritarianism as only a means to an end. Also, we must not forget that the country was reforming itself into a Republic, which can be seen as the final step towards the Ethical Totalitarian State that Fascism always preached for (here, refer to Rutilio Sermonetti's "*on Socialization*").

"It is thus evident that the aims of Fascism and of Socialism are to a very great extent identical. In fact, it may be said without exaggeration, that what is happening Italy to-day, in the economic sphere, is substantially what would happen under a Socialist Government that was free from electioneering considerations. To a very great extent Fascism is Socialism. Yet in the political sphere Fascists and Socialists fight each other desperately without realizing that the difference between their respective aims is less than between the aims of either and those of the laissez-faire school. The Socialistic tendencies of Fascism ought to be duly realized both by the adherents and opponents of the movement."

Paul Einzig - The Economic Foundations of Fascism

XI

In such a perspective everybody is educated to become a hero... This cult of heroism is strictly linked with the cult of death.

“The narrative provided is intended to serve cognitive ends. By pretending that Mussolini’s regime found support in nothing other than irrationality and violence, some contemporary commentators have delivered only a parody of Fascist thought. They have left us bereft of any real understanding of one of the major revolutions of our immediate past. That not only affects our comprehension of the past, but may very well impair our understanding of the revolutions in our future. To imagine that the Fascism of the twentieth century was inspired and vindicated by an appeal to simple violence, and hatred is not only a fiction—but may very well be a significantly misleading fiction as well. As a case in point, the number of Fascist intellectuals who advocated war, violence, and hatred for their own sake were both few and marginal.”

A. James Gregor - Mussolini’s Intellectuals

From D'annunzio to Marinetti, this type of belief has appeared as a consequence of the Romantic and Futurist tendencies within the regime. It has served as a representation of the ideal of dying beautiful and avoiding the degradation of the body. Mussolini also held a belief where he would often say that he had lived for too long and that now would be the time to pass away. **Nevertheless, this cult of heroism came into existence way before Fascism ever tapped into it up as a means to an end.**

From the supporters of The Socialism of Nations such as Corradini up until Sorel’s myths of Violence, many National Syndicalists have this sort of already existing notion of death and martyrdom. This is one of those points where Eco grabs an aspect that may be present in Fascism (in some form) yet remains to be so vague and wide across a spectrum of ideas (before and after Fascism) that Eco fails to grasp the origins of the understanding that Fascism had.

“Corradini anticipated that thinking syndicalists would inevitably recognize the reality of the modern world. Syndicalism, with its call to discipline, sacrifice, and heroism, could only eventually become a national syndicalism and become a collateral support for revolutionary nationalism. Corradini, as early as 1909–11, anticipated an ultimate coming together of both revolutionary movements.”

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectual

Once again... within the confines of Italian Fascism, the variety of beliefs and approaches within the Doctrine differed among various interpretations, especially at the time where Fascist theory was being developed.

We can also top this rebuttal off with the point that this ideal has been present among other ideologies just as it has been present with different Fascist beliefs. Eco's point ends up being a dialectical and historical display of ignorance, since **pretty much every other ideology ends up conceiving of a concept of martyrdom and heroism as a form of sacrifice in exchange for the political benefits espoused by the ideology.**

“A civilization must exalt a tradition of heroism. This it may do in war or pyramid building. Liberalism never glorified heroism in theory but, in its frontier empire-building days, it exemplified heroism in its practice.”

Lawrence Dennis - Dynamics on War and Revolution

XII

Machismo (which implies both disdain for women and intolerance and condemnation of nonstandard sexual habits, from chastity to homosexuality)

“As Italian and Fascist women you have particular duties to perform: you must be the custodians of the hearths, (the crowd shouts with one voice: "Yes! Yes!"), You must give with your vigilant attention, with your unfailing love, the first imprint on the offspring that we desire to be numerous and vigorous...

Fascist women! For its action of national and social assistance that must go from the cities to the fields, the Regime has counted and is counting on you. ("Yes! Yes!"). “

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, June 20, 1937

Fascism, especially proto-fascist systems (such as D’annunzio’s proto-Fascism in Fiume and Marinetti’s Futurist Fascism) promoted sexual liberation and equal rights for women and men. Like the original Fascist manifesto and the Italian Futurist Party’s platform, the Charter of Carnaro would come to represent a number of progressive values that would soon be imparted through the poet-soldier’s small conquest. Many of D’annunzio’s former men would later go on to support Mussolini’s Fascist project.

It is worth mentioning the existence of often-disregarded and notoriously homosexuals figures within the early stages of Fascism, such as Guido Keller. It is also worth mentioning the regime’s approval towards individuals like Federico Garcia Lorca.

The ideal that Fascism had to offer was that of progress, and its influence was even compatible with Feminism. This was especially true in the case of the British Fascists (which, of the Fascist movements around the world, bears the closest resemblance to Italian Fascism), and pro-Fascist Feminists like Mary Richardson and Mary Sophia Allen.

Fascism as a political movement would go on to have former feminists support the ideology, only to fight together under the banner of equal rights for Women. This wasn't foreign to the Italian Movement either, due to the fact that even **Mussolini himself went to the feminist congresses in Rome. Fascism had a strong influence on women who were pivotal to Feminism in Italy, such as Ines Donati**, whom Mussolini would state the following: *"I have known of her fame for a long time and know that she is a fierce Italian, an indomitable fascist"*.

Funnily enough, upon closer inspection to the Italian regime by different historians, it can be seen that the policies that have been deemed as oppressive or in any sort of way "anti-feminist" came out of the circumstances of the times and requirements of the regime, not really out of an actual rejection of Feminism in on itself from the side of the regime.

*"Fascists were not antifeminists, per se, a fact which suggests that **any effort to explain their postures via some constant notions of sexual frustration, latent homosexuality, or capitalist oppression is eminently implausible.** Fascist policies concerning women were the products of a number of contingent circumstances and probability assessments. In effect, antifeminism was not endemic or essential to the Fascist persuasion..."*

In their program of 1919, the Fascists advocated suffrage rights for women, and in 1922 Fascists could still allude to the Statute of Carnaro, instituted by Gabrielle D' Annunzio during the occupation of Fiume, as a prefiguration of Fascism. In that Statute (Declaration Twelve) it was insisted that "all citizens, irrespective of sex, have complete rights in the pursuit of employment in industry, the professions, arts and crafts."...

Until 1925 there was little in Fascist ideology or Fascist policy that could be identified as essentially antifeminist. In a Latin country with a long tradition of male dominance, Fascist dispositions were at least mildly progressive. Certainly there was little in the orthodox socialism of Italy that made it aggressive in the insistence upon women's rights. The issue of women's rights was of marginal interest (with some notable exceptions) to the entire Italian revolutionary movement. By 1927 the situation had materially altered. Not

only had Mussolini embarked upon an explicit population policy predicated on large families, but unemployment had begun to become a constant concern...

*With the collapse of the Italian economy in the international crisis of 1929, all these elements coalesced to produce the ideological and legislative orientations that came to constitute the Fascist policy on women. By 1932 there were over one million Italians registered as unemployed. Irrespective of extensive public works programs and the reduction in per capita hours, the rate of unemployment did not begin to abate significantly until 1935. **In the interim, the Fascist position with regard to women hardened into a set of convictions, buttressed by legislation, that gave the ideology the cast by which it is now identified.***

Given the commitment to the monogamous family as the best vehicle for large and disciplined families, conjoined with the conviction that the emancipation of women constituted a primary cause in the "voluntary limitation in the number of pregnancies," the termination of unwanted pregnancies, and relatively late marriages, Fascist ideologues argued that the movement to emancipate women was counterrevolutionary. Women should be inured to roles that were complementary, rather than competitive, to those discharged by men...

*It is reasonably clear that Fascist policy on women was dictated by several very impersonal concerns. The ideological foundation of the policy was the determination to make Italy a ranking power in a competitive world composed of powerful potential enemies. Italy required a population of sixty million souls if it were to face such competitors during the second half of the twentieth century. **The subsequent policy toward women was the product of this determination and the fact that Italy, between 1880 and 1922, suffered a decline in births from 37.8 per thousand to 30.2 per thousand. This, conjoined with the conviction that feminism, the emancipation of women, was a significant causal factor in that decline, bred the subsequent policy. The increasing unemployment after 1927 exacerbated the antifeminist tendency...***

Fascism may have been instrumental in removing women from the job market (the percentage of Italian women involved in extradomestic employment declined from 30 percent of the labor force in 1920 to 19 percent in 1931) , but

the statistics are not unequivocal. Most industrial countries had experienced a decline in the employment of women after 1900. In Italy, Fascist policy may have contributed to this decline, but it is in no ways certain. On the other hand, in certain employment areas like teaching or in the fine arts, the number of women employed increased significantly during the Fascist period. All of which suggests that Fascist antifeminism was not particularly successful and/ or may not have been pursued with any special application. In any event, Fascist antifeminism was, at best, a subsidiary concern of Fascist social policy, and made its appearance largely as a consequence of concerns with a declining birthrate and rising unemployment. ”

A. James Gregor - Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship

It was not entirely foreign to Fascism to see the inclusion of former suffragettes wherever it appeared. Perhaps the greatest example of this was in the case of Britain, as their case for supporting equality with women would be entirely based on Doctrine. Being well-versed in Fascism (as it was practiced in Italy), Oswald Mosley, leader of the BUF, would make a strong case for defending the equal rights of women.

“Fascism in Britain will maintain the British principle of honouring and elevating the position of women. We certainly combat the decadence of the present system which treats the position of wife and mother as inferior. On the contrary, we consider this to be one of the greatest of human and racial functions to be honoured and encouraged. But women will be free to pursue their own vocations. Fascism combats the false values of decadence not by force, but by persuasion and example.”

Oswald Mosley - Fascism: 100 Questions Asked and Answered

[Article worth checking out on British Fascism and Feminism](#)

[Short article on D’annunzio’s Fiume](#)

[In depth video on Fascism and Feminism](#)

Many authors have pointed out that Fascism actually came out of a place of “decadence”, of sexual liberation, and out of a certain urge for progress. D’annunzio’s Fiume would be a foundation in the pursuit of the ideal of Fascism. **His state, although not Fascist in the full-sense of the word, would be a certain form of proto-fascistic rule and (far from the claims of Eco) it sought to establish a state based on free love and gender equality.**

“Gabriele D’Annunzio, who is not only a great poet but a great soldier, the first soldier of Italy, has dared to perform an act that scared our cowardly government. We salute the Hero and we promise you that we will obey his every nod... Every offense against Gabriele D’Annunzio, each act made against him, constitutes an attack on all the great deeds he has done; it is an attack on Italy itself. Long live D’Annunzio! Long live Italy! Long live Fiume!”

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Milan, September 13, 1919

Fascist Italy, in and of itself, didn’t ever really adopt a hostile position against homosexuals as one might think. No laws would appear in favor of or against it. All that can really be pointed out would be the supposed “Islands” (that were mostly filled with pedophiles and undesirables).

For Fascism, Manhood, just like Womanhood, are equally valuable in the Spirit of improving the Nation. It is through both that you achieve the synthesis of unity that every Fascist nation always looks for.

XIII

In a democracy, the citizens have individual rights, but the citizens in their entirety have a political impact only from a quantitative point of view—one follows the decisions of the majority. For Ur-Fascism, however, individuals as individuals have no rights, and the People is conceived as a quality, a monolithic entity expressing the Common Will.

We've all heard the concept of "Everything Inside the State, Nothing Outside the State, Nothing Against the State" by Mussolini. The issue comes into play when people misinterpret this, since it merely refers to a doctrinal conception of the origins of political notions, such as the rights or the idea of an individual.

Within the Fascist conception, the State is the People: it is a Single Entity made up of different branches, in the same way a Person is made of different body parts. The Individual can only have rights inside the State, not outside of the State. The Individual is indeed part of something greater, yet, should maintain its individuality since it is the conception of great individual men that carries Fascism. It is the ideal that, since we are all in this together, we all have something to contribute to society. This doesn't mean that the regime will adapt itself to you, neither will you adapt yourself to it, but that both will work hand by hand to achieve both personal goals and national goals.

You, as an individual, are valuable within Fascism, but you still have a duty since you've been allowed to work within the framework that the State enables you to work through (not to mention, there are the benefits that you get for being part of it).

It is here where Eco carries on the trend we've been noticing since the beginning: he makes claims, cries, moans, yet, he fails to grasp the meaning of what's behind it or if what he's saying is really true.

The other issue that comes up is that his claims are SO BROAD that they also apply to a lot of other ideologies out there. That they're not solely or necessarily born of Fascism makes it futile to believe that they are unique to

Fascist beliefs. **Many of the points can be applied Anti-Fascist or Non-Fascist regimes.**

The conception that Fascism didn't engage in any sort of participatory activities is also a lie, due to the constant reforms that the regime would adopt based on consulting with the population and the fact that the main goal of Italian Fascism was, from the start to finish, a Republic that engaged in Socialization of the Means of Production along Participatory Measures for Workers. For this, I can provide the following excerpt of Rutilio Sermonti's On Socialization:

"The fundamental canon of the fascist revolution was that of gradualism, both so as not to provoke a tragic crisis and because truly profound innovations cannot be made by striking left and right, but only allowing the popular "forma mentis " to evolve in the desired direction. Whoever speaks of a breakdown, or of substantial change, or of regret or even of a return to the origins is unknown, can only do so due to lack of information, superficiality or taking sides. It is clear that the socialization of 1944 is nothing more than pure and distilled corporatism and corporatism is synonymous with fascism. In this sense, the path to socialization had different progressive stages:

First phase: Trade union law (Law of April 3, 1926 Number 563). *With this law, trade union associations, both employers and workers, were entrusted with the delicate public function of establishing with legislative effect the conditions of work and remuneration that were the object of secular conflict.*

Second phase: Carta del Lavoro, published on April 21, 1927 as a pragmatic declaration of the PNF and converted into a State law thirteen years later. *It's important because it solemnly sanctions that both work, in all its forms, and private initiative, in the field of production, are national duties and functions that must be regulated and supervised by the State. Labor is, therefore, an instrument of the nation (as well as capital), not an instrument of capital.*

Third phase: Corporations (Fundamental Law of February 3, 1934 Number 136). *Were organs of the State established by productive branches and*

guardians of their demands. They were made up equally of representatives of the trade union associations, of the two “parties” interested in each branch. Therefore, the workers’ representatives thus formulated, together with the business community, the production directives that the companies had to obey. The exaltation and responsibility of the “work factor” had taken a good leap forward.

Fourth phase: The reform of political representation (Law of January 19, 1939 Number 129). It was the decisive move to “organic representation”, that is, by functions and not by unqualified generic consensus. For the problem that concerns us, the National Councilors (who replaced the deputies) were half members of the National Council of Corporations. It means that the workers’ representatives sat as such and as such in the highest legislative body. Thus, in public law, any subordination of work to capital was definitely abolished.

Fifth phase: The reform of the civil codes of 1940 (Law of January 3, 1941 Number 14).

It is truly unique that none of the commentators refer to it, as if the idea of socialization was a cricket that jumped at Mussolini’s head as he flew out of Campo Imperatores alongside Otto Skorzeny. However, in that code there was already socialization. There we find the responsibility of the employer (or who represents him if he is anonymous) defined as “head” of the company and not owner or employer. There we find the responsibility of the employer to the State for his management of the company. It is evident, as I have stated before, that socialization was only the last phase of a journey that was contained in the DNA of fascism and that, if anything, it was slightly anticipated and not delayed. The objectives of the socialization of the Italian Social Republic had nothing to do with the vague concept of “social justice”, the master key of all demagogues, it was rather the successive step towards the construction of an organized society”

XIV

Fascist schoolbooks made use of an impoverished vocabulary, and an elementary syntax, in order to limit the instruments for complex and critical reasoning.

“Fascism is thought of as well and it has a theory, which is an essential part of this historical phenomenon, and which is responsible in a great measure for the successes—that have been achieved. To the existence of this ideal content of Fascism, to the truth of this Fascist logic we ascribe the fact that though we commit many errors of detail, we very seldom go astray on fundamentals, whereas all the parties of the opposition, deprived as they are of an informing, animating principle, of a unique directing concept, do very often wage their war faultlessly in minor tactics, better trained as they are in parliamentary and journalistic manoeuvres, but they constantly break down on the important issues.”

Alfredo Rocco - The Political Doctrine of Fascism

"Education involves free action, the vocation of our souls, the duty of humankind, an act which, more nobly than any other, allows the human being to actualize his superior nature. Animals do not educate themselves even when they raise their young. They do not form families, ethical organisms in which differentiated members organize themselves into systems. Human beings, on the other hand, freely and consciously, acknowledge our children as we do our parents and brothers as extensions of ourselves. In such circumstances we consciously develop our respective personalities and seek to assist in the development of the personality of others. In the human family, in society, in the city, in any community, we constitute but one collective spirit, with common needs that are satisfied through individual activity within a social matrix. If human beings are said to be political or social animals, one can also say that they are animals that educate."

Giovanni Gentile - The Reform of Education

“Between 1923 and 1936 the total number of primary school pupils rose from just under 3,981,000 to 5,187,000, secondary school pupils from 326,604 to 674,546 and university students from 43,235 to 71,512. Bottai tried hard to encourage freedom of speech and criticism among young Fascists on the correct grounds that without them the Fascist ambition to create a new ruling class would fail. For a while during the 1930s the young did enjoy remarkable freedom of expression; much more so than adult Italians. Young Fascists openly said that the corporate state, for example, should not just manage but own the means of production.”

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

*“Fascism believed that mankind could progress, though Mussolini had quickly lost faith in the pre-Fascist generations.... This is why Fascism focused such an enormous amount of energy on the fascistizzazione of youth. The Nazis, on the other hand, did not look forward but back, aspiring to re-create a mythical Aryan. For them the modern was bad. **For the Fascists it was not. The Fascists did not burn books or ban modern art.**”*

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

The fact that this is even a point at all has to be the most hilarious thing about Eco: **he just insults Fascists by calling them dumb, from which he then proceeds to call it a day and pretend he is right.** It truly gets ironic when one considers that **the one reform that represented the aspirations of Fascism, both in the present and future, was the Reform of Education.** Not only that, but the one of the main mottos of the regime was based on the notion of the Book and the Rifle. Spiritual/Intellectual Formation was just as important as the capacity to take action, since it was the latter that got directed with a fervent belief in the former.

Many authors have pointed out the efforts of educating and improving upon the formation of Italians within Fascist Italy. The regime ultimately produced

Nobel Prize winners such as Luigi Pirandello, Guglielmo Marconi, Jacinto Benavente, etc. This claim of Eco is mostly made to be slander due to the fact that upon closer look, we can clearly see that the regime not only had a theoretical model of its own, but it gave way for complex terminologies and authors that were highly inspired by thinkers like Giovanni Gentile. One example of this can be seen in British historian R. G. Collingwood, who would follow Gentile's idealistic beliefs.

We must not forget either that Gentile would start up a school of thought known as Actual Idealism (for more on this, refer to his text *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*), which the regime would base its policies on and would use to defend as its way of improving upon itself with constant changes in the pursuit of struggle, thus the changing nature of Fascism and the need to constantly adapt it to reality. Mussolini once said, *"The sanctity of an ism is not in the ism; it has no sanctity beyond its power to do, to work, to succeed in practice. It may have succeeded yesterday and failed tomorrow. Failed yesterday and will succeed tomorrow. The machine, first of all, must run!"*

Critical thinking was endorsed and so was a difference of opinion, nevertheless, the ability to subvert or engage in divisive acts was not allowed. **The regime would certainly attempt its Ethical Totalitarian Dream, but nevertheless, it would include different thinkers within its sphere as a way to keep diversity going in the sense of what path is the best. The varieties of proposals on what to do and how to achieve its goals were different due to the complexity of each of the members of both the National Fascist Party and the later Republican Fascist Party.**

We also must not forget that the way in which the movement rose was highly divided among different thinkers and currents that would often directly oppose one another, yet, somehow they were all able to find common unity within the creed of Fascism. **Even though some left the movement afterwards, the variety of and need for diversity of thought within Fascism has always been necessary and endorsed.**

"The most obvious schism within Fascism was between Farinacci and Bottai; between intransigentismo and revisionismo. Mussolini said that they were merely 'Two keys on the same piano' but Bottai's Critica Fascista said that

while he was Fascism's 'Holy Water' Farinacci was its 'Devil'. Bottai did not believe that the party should control the state but that it should connect the state with the nation via its officials who should be elected by members and enjoy complete freedom of speech. There were many other currents of opinion within Fascism — the unions, the ex-nationalists, the fiancheggiatori — notably described in an article in Critica Fascista in 1925 as 'The Five Souls of Fascism' — each one more or less at odds with the other"

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

At the end of the day, it is the constant need (that Fascism has pursued to actualize its doctrine) and the refusal (that it has maintained to formally establish a deadset reality) that allows it to contain so many currents of thought (be it nationalist or internationalist) within its general outline. **The necessity for Fascism to have some kind of internal mechanism for feedback can always be seen.** The fact that there were so many discussions and schools of thought (regarding praxis and theoretical interpretation) is what makes it so unique. From the theories of Universal Fascism to the Fascist School of Mysticism, **there was always a variety of thought that was endorsed by the regime itself in order to push for the permanent revolution that Fascism aimed to create.**

“When it is written that we are the white guard for the bourgeoisie, it is the vilest of lies. I defended, and I state this with full conviction, workers' progress. Amongst the principal causes for the fall of Fascism I blame the deaf and merciless fight of certain financial and industrial groups who, in their mad egoism, feared and hated Fascism as the worst enemy of their inhuman interests. I must say for the purpose of justice, that the Italian capital, the part which is legitimate and holds itself up with the ability of its industry, has always understood the needs of society, even when they required sacrifice to address new labour terms. The humble folk of labour have always loved me and love me still...

Nobody will be able to erase twenty years of Fascism from Italy's history. I have no illusion regarding my fate. They will not give me a trial, because they know that from a defendant I would become a prosecutor. They will probably murder me and then claim that I committed suicide, overcome by remorse. He who fears death has never lived, and I have lived, perhaps even too much. Life is nothing more than an intersection between two eternities: the past and the future. As long as my star shone, I was enough for all. Now that it fades, everybody is not enough for me. I will go where destiny will want me because I always did what fate requested of me.

Fascists who will remain faithful to principles will need to be exemplary citizens. They must respect the laws that the people will give, and cooperate loyally with legitimate authorities to help them heal, as quickly as possible, the fatherland's wounds. Whomever will behave differently will demonstrate that he no longer supports the fatherland when he has to serve it from below. Fascists, in other words, will have to act out of passion, not resentment. Their behaviour will depend on a speedier historical rehabilitation of Fascism. Because now it is night, but later, day will break...

Today I forgive those who don't forgive me and condemn me, thereby condemning themselves. I think of all those to whom it will be denied for years to love and suffer for the fatherland, and I would like them to feel not only witnesses of a defeat, but also bearers of a rebirth...”

The Last Testament of Benito Mussolini/Last Thoughts of the Duce

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